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Carol X Weakley 10/12/2006 04:34:19 PM From DB/Inbox: Carol X Weakley

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UNCLAS TEL AVIV 04021

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 07 TEL AVIV 004021

SIPDIS

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NSC FOR NEA STAFF

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HQ USAF FOR XOX  
DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
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CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
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PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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[11.](#) Mideast

[12.](#) Iran

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Key stories in the media:  
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Israel Radio quoted Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as saying Wednesday in Washington, in an address to the American Task Force on Palestine: "I know the commitment of the Palestinian people to a better future. I know firsthand the commitment of President Abbas and moderate Palestinians to that future. And I know the commitment of the people in this room and of the American Task Force on Palestine that one day indeed there will be a Palestinian state living side by side in peace with Israel. I can only tell you that I, too, have a personal commitment to that goal because I believe that there could be no greater legacy for America than to help to bring into being a Palestinian state for a people who have suffered too long, who have been humiliated too long, who have not reached their potential for too long, and who have so much to give to the international community and to all of us. I promise you my personal commitment to that goal." The radio noted that earlier in her speech, the Secretary refrained from specifically condemning the Palestinian government and reminded her audience that the US had supported the parliamentary elections in which "as you know, a plurality of voters cast their votes for Hamas."

Israel Radio quoted Khaled Mashal, the head of Hamas's political bureau, as saying in an interview with the London-based Al-Hayat that he does not rule preventing by force the holding of early elections that would be called by PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas. Mashal accused PM Ehud Olmert of having torpedoed the deal to have IDF soldier Cpl. Gilad Shalit released. Ha'aretz reported that during a press conference Wednesday, Osama Hamdan, a senior Hamas official in Lebanon, accused Fatah of foiling Qatari efforts to broker the establishment of a Palestinian unity government. Hamdan was quoted as saying that through its actions, Fatah was offering political support for Western sanctions against PM Ismail Haniyeh's Hamas-led government. Hamdan was quoted as saying that Abbas and his team were "providing political cover for American-Israeli sanctions." The Jerusalem Post reported that Hamas leaders on Wednesday sought to defuse tensions with Cairo by appealing to Egypt to resume its mediation efforts to form a Palestinian unity government.

Israel Radio quoted Palestinian sources as saying that overnight, five Palestinians from a single family were killed in an air strike in the southern Gaza Strip. The radio said that four of them were Hamas militants and that the fifth one was a youth. Ha'aretz and other media reported that two Palestinians were killed and three wounded by IDF fire in several territories. Troops also arrested two Palestinians reportedly attempting to bomb a West Bank checkpoint. Israel Radio reported that three Qassam rockets landed in Sderot this morning, causing no casualties.

Ha'aretz reported that Labor Party Chairman Amir Peretz announced Wednesday that he opposes bringing Knesset Member Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu Party into the coalition, but that did not appear to dent Olmert's determination to try to broaden the coalition and thereby increase his government's stability. Ha'aretz reported that Olmert's aides made it clear last night that they blamed rebels in the Labor Party for forcing Olmert's hand with their lack of coalition discipline. This morning, Israel Radio reported that Lieberman demands only one cabinet seat for his party. Media reported that Olmert is offering him a new portfolio devoted

to strategic affairs. Yediot reported that Jordan's King Abdullah II is worried about the strengthening of the Israeli Right.

Ha'aretz cited a new report by the Israeli nonprofit organization Physicians for Human Rights, which charges that the Shin Bet security service is systematically preventing Palestinians who need medical treatment unavailable in the territories from entering Israel. According to the organization, in many cases, patients have been denied urgent, life-saving treatment. The report says that the Shin Bet automatically refuses entry permits, and reconsiders its decisions only if legal action is begun. Ha'aretz cited the Shin Bet's response that it has to balance security considerations against human rights, and reported that the security service noted that terrorist groups have tried to take advantage of Palestinian patients with entry permits in order to carry out attacks inside Israel.

The Jerusalem Post reported that an e-mail campaign criticizing the decision of the United Jewish Communities (UJC) -- the umbrella organization of North American Jewish federations and communities -- to allocate part of the funds raised for Israel after the Lebanon war to Israeli Arabs is stirring debate in the American Jewish community.

Leading media reported that American student Michael Leighton Phillips, 24, a volunteer with Project Hope, a Canada-based group, was freed late Wednesday after being held for a day in Nablus by Palestinians. He appeared to be unharmed. Phillips is from New Orleans. Israel Radio reported that Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades militants brought him to security headquarters in Nablus. Earlier Wednesday, Ansar Assuna, a previously unknown Palestinian armed group, claimed it had kidnapped an American student to "confront" the US and force the release of some Palestinians held in Israeli prisons. The group made demands to reporters in the Gaza Strip by masked gunmen claiming it was holding 24-year-old Michael Phillips. Ha'aretz's web site quoted an American Consulate official as saying that Phillips was missing but that could not confirm that he was kidnapped. The Internet site said that the official was speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters.

Ha'aretz and The Jerusalem Post quoted Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri as saying Wednesday in an interview published Wednesday in the British daily The Guardian that Hizbullah will resume its fighting against Israel if it does not withdraw from the Sheba Farms area. Citing AP, The Jerusalem Post reported that on Wednesday Italian PM Romano Prodi gave his moral support to Lebanon during his visit to that country. The Jerusalem Post reported that Prodi offered to mediate in the release of the two IDF reservists abducted by Hizbullah.

Ha'aretz and The Jerusalem Post cited the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) as reporting Wednesday that dovish pro-Israel members of the American Jewish community are planning to set up a pro-Israel alternative to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee lobby (AIPAC). Among the figures behind the initiative are billionaire philanthropist George Soros, who has not been involved with Israeli issues until now, philanthropists Edgar and Charles Bronfman, and Mel Levine, a former Democratic congressman and now high-powered West Coast lawyer. Ha'aretz reported that on Wednesday, Meretz Chairman MK Yossi Beilin commended the establishment of the new lobby. Beilin told Ha'aretz that the lobby would not compete with AIPAC but portray another facet of American Jewry. The founders have been discussing ways to persuade the Bush administration to increase its involvement in finding a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The initiative for the lobby is spearheaded by Dr. David Elcott, executive director of the Israel Policy Forum (IPF), an advocacy think tank founded to counter AIPAC's objection to the Oslo Accords.

Citing AP, Ha'aretz and The Jerusalem Post quoted David Shearer, head of the UN's office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Jerusalem, as saying Wednesday that the number of Israeli military roadblocks in the West Bank increased by nearly 40 percent in the past year -- from 376 to 528.

All media prominently reported on an accident that occurred in Manhattan Wednesday: A light airplane flown by New York Yankees

pitcher Cory Lidle collided into the 30th floor of a 50-story apartment building. Media questioned security arrangements in New York City's air space five years after 9/11.

Maariv told the story of two brothers -- Binyamin Ben-Ari, who serves in the IDF, and Michael Dudley, a US Marine posted in Iraq.

Yediot cited the concern of the Israeli defense establishment that Israel's defense exports to India would suffer following the alleged bribing affair to Indian officials. Major media reported that the Indian suspects have accused the leaders of the Indian National Congress, India's ruling party, of making up the affair.

Yediot reported that, five years after 9/11, the FBI still does not employ a sufficient number of Arabic speakers.

Yediot reported that last week the IDF arrested Shelley Mizrachi, who was born in the US to Israeli immigrants, for dodging the draft. Mizrachi had come to Israel for a visit and to arrange her induction into the IDF.

Yediot presented the results of a Mina Zemach (Dahaf Institute) poll:

"Were elections for the Knesset held today, for whom would you vote?" (Results in Knesset seats -- in brackets, seats in current Knesset.)

-Likud 22 (12); Yisrael Beiteinu 20 (11); Kadima 15 (29); Labor Party 15 (19); Shas 10 (12); Arab parties 10 (10); National Union-National Religious Party 5 (9); United Torah Judaism 5 (6); Meretz 4 (5); Gil - Pensioners' Party 4 (7); "floating votes" -- equivalent to 10 Knesset seats.

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II. Mideast:  
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Summary:  
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Zalman Shoval, senior Likud member and former ambassador to the US, wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "[Condoleezza] Rice's main goal in her trip was to form a kind of informal bloc of moderate Sunni Arab governments versus Shi'ite Iran.... But very soon the Secretary of State learned that the candidates for joining the US initiative have other intentions." Nationalist writer Uri Dan commented in the popular, pluralist Maariv: "Unfortunately, the 'Chamberlainian' spirit in the United States' media and politics is presently gaining over the Bush administration's Churchillian policy."

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "[Yisrael Beiteinu Party leader Avigdor] Lieberman is in favor of domineering and uncompromising policy that uses force, in both words and deeds, against an ever-lengthening list of enemies to which he is careful to add Israel's Arab citizens. Olmert's government has no reason to bring him in."

Block Quotes:  
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II. "Journey to Nowhere"

Zalman Shoval, senior Likud member and former ambassador to the US, wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (10/12): "Condoleezza Rice will probably want to forget her latest journey to the Middle East.... The affairs [of Bob Woodward's 9/11-related revelations and of that of former Republican Congressman Mark Foley] strengthened the feeling of Rice's interlocutors that the Republican administration, which is destabilized in any case due to the entanglement in Iraq, is about to lose its majority in at least one of the two houses of Congress, which will also undermine her authority. Rice's main goal in her trip was to form a kind of informal bloc of moderate Sunni Arab governments versus Shi'ite Iran, whose status in the region has risen following what is

perceived as Hizbullah's victory in the second Lebanon War. But very soon the Secretary of State learned that the candidates for joining the US initiative have other intentions. It is not that the Arab rulers who are considered allies of the US are not quaking in their boots over the Shi'ite danger and the Iranian nuclear threat. But as they told Rice, they do not intend to openly confront other Arab governments or movements, and will certainly not be willing to make any statement on the Iranian matter. In general, all the problems would be solved if the US would work to resolve the Israeli-Arab conflict (i.e. pressure Israel) -- and in the meantime, Abu Mazen must be helped.... Voices can be heard in the [Israeli] government to the effect that Israel should accommodate the Palestinians, even partially, so as not to reach a head-on collision with Rice. But no one should have illusions with regard to the fact that opening the crossings and releasing the funds will help not only Abu Mazen, but also the collapsing Hamas government, and could pave the way to forming a Palestinian unity government based on the plan of elements that have inscribed the destruction of Israel on their banner."

## II. "Hate Is Celebrating"

Nationalist writer Uri Dan commented in the popular, pluralist Maariv (10/12): "Time is running out... Like in Israel, US politicians and media people (such as The New York Times) incessantly erode Bush's Churchillian policy in the face of the worldwide Muslim threat. Unfortunately, the 'Chamberlainian' spirit in the United States' media and politics is presently gaining over the Bush administration's Churchillian policy. In Israel, the leftist brainwashing has not yet succeeded in reaching similar achievements. Israelis feel threatened and are prepared for a true leadership that would restore their confidence. And Israel also has answers to Iran's atom -- in full coordination with the US, of course."

## III. "War of Survival"

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (10/12): "Despite the fact that the government has a solid majority, with 67 Knesset members, the Prime Minister is involved in an incomprehensible effort to expand it. It is hard to see the point in bringing together two parties, such as Labor and Yisrael Beiteinu, which have nothing in common in either the foreign or socioeconomic spheres.... In the past few days, changing the system of government has turned into a successful tactic to divert attention from the real problems on the agenda. [Yisrael Beiteinu leader] Avigdor Lieberman has managed to force his platform into the public debate, on his way into the government..... Lieberman is in favor of domineering and uncompromising policy that uses force, in both words and deeds, against an ever-lengthening list of enemies to which he is careful to add Israel's Arab citizens. Olmert's government has no reason to bring him in."

### ----- 12. Iran: -----

#### Summary:

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Senior military affairs analyst Reuven Pedatzur wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "Israel must take advantage of the fury that is presently being aroused by North Korea in order to promote the inevitable change in its nuclear policy."

#### Block Quotes:

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#### "Perhaps They'll Get It Now"

Senior military affairs analyst Reuven Pedatzur wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (10/12): "Israel must continue to try to convince the international community that a nuclear Iran endangers the entire free world, and to hope that decisive steps will be taken against it. The only effective way is an American military operation..... Unfortunately, however, the chances of an American military attack on Iran are not great, and thus we return once again to the need to prepare to confront a nuclear Iran. This

preparation must include a substantial change in Israeli nuclear policy -- the abandonment of vague deterrence and the transition to open nuclear deterrence. Experience during the Cold War period teaches that only such deterrence is likely to prevent the use of nuclear weapons by the other side.... This change in Israeli nuclear policy must be implemented with advance coordination and with the consent of the Americans. We can assume that Washington is willing to allow Israel to abandon the vagueness if the threat to it is nuclear. Israel must take advantage of the fury that is presently being aroused by North Korea in order to promote the inevitable change in its nuclear policy."

CRETZ